

# indykids

Nas t-shirt controversy  
PAGE 7

Issue #14 ★ March/April 2008

## The War in Iraq: Five Years

### As Support For War Drops, Iraq Vets Resist

By Erin Thompson

**F**ive years after the United States invaded Iraq in March 2003, support for the war has gone way down. According to recent polls, two-thirds of people in the United States support ending the war and withdrawing all troops.

However, Congress has continued to fund the war in Iraq, which has cost nearly \$500 billion so far, according to the National Priorities Project.

In March, many antiwar groups are organizing protests calling for an end to the war. Soldiers and members of the U.S. military are also speaking out against the war. Some soldiers have refused to go on missions. Others have even chosen to leave the military and tell the public about their experiences.

Members of Iraq Veterans Against the War are speaking out during a four-day hearing in Washington, D.C. The veterans are testifying about war crimes committed by U.S. military forces in Iraq. They hope that by speaking out they will encourage others to resist from within the military.

"It's possible to fight back," said Iraq veteran Fernando Braga on February 21, during an event organized by Iraq Veterans Against the War.

"You gotta have a group that's willing to take the risk," he said. "Maybe we can end the war."



PROTEST PHOTO BY EMMANUEL FUENTEBELLA

3,974

U.S. military personnel killed (as of March 6)

158,000

Current number of U.S. troops in Iraq

1 million

Estimated number of Iraqis killed

5 million

Number of Iraqi refugees

\$1,636

Estimated cost of the war per person so far.



SOURCES: AP, AFP, OPINION RESEARCH BUSINESS, UN REFUGEE AGENCY, THE WASHINGTON POST; MAP: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

#### IRAQ WAR TIMELINE

**March 19, 2003:** President Bush launches invasion of Iraq, saying, "The people of the United States and our friends and allies will not live at the mercy of an outlaw regime that threatens the peace with weapons of mass murder."

**May 1, 2003:** President Bush declares "major

combat operations" in Iraq are over.

**April 28, 2004:** Photographs of U.S. soldiers torturing Iraqi prisoners released.

**January 12, 2005:** The search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq is declared over by intelligence officials. No weapons were found.

**March 19, 2008:** Fifth anniversary of the war.

#### TWO IRAQI REFUGEES

*Zahra and Laith are two of the 5 million Iraqis forced to leave their homes because it is too dangerous to stay. They both now live in Syria.*



#### Zahra Rifaat, 12

After my family was forced to leave our beloved country we came to live in Syria. I get scared every time I remember

when a group of armed men came into my school with big frightening guns. When an explosion happened very close to our house in Baghdad, we decided it wasn't worth it to stay and that we should leave. I remember that day very well. I was crying and feeling

very sad.

I am going to school here. I have new friends, but I still can't wait to go back to my home country, to my friends.



#### Laith Faris, 14

I live with my family in Syria. We came here first in 2006. Four months after we arrived, we started to hear that the security situation was getting better in Iraq. We decid-

ed to go back. Upon our return, crimes started to escalate. When my uncle was killed for no reason, my father was imprisoned for five months and nobody knew why and people were killed in front of our house, we knew we weren't going to stay any longer. Two days after my father was released we left again.

.....

If you're interested in talking with Zahra, Laith or other Iraqi refugees by videochat, go to the following website: [www.nativewithoutanation.blogspot.com](http://www.nativewithoutanation.blogspot.com).

## Ethiopia Quick Facts

**Population:** 83.1 million • **Capital:** Addis Ababa • **Languages:** Amharic, Oromo, Tigrinya, Somali • **Religions:** Christian, Muslim  
**President:** Girma Woldegiorgis • **Poverty:** 38.7% of the people live below the poverty line • **History:** One of only two countries on the continent of Africa that were not colonized by Europe

## MEET 'O.P.' FROM ETHIOPIA

**Name:** Luwan "O.P." Equaby, 10

**Home:** Addis Ababa **Languages:** Amharic, English, studying French

**Parents:** Her parents work as travel agents.

**Siblings:** 1 brother and 3 sisters.

**Favorite foods:** Injera (traditional Ethiopian bread), pizza.

**Favorite subjects in school:** Science and English.

**What she wants to be when she grows up:** Pilot.

**Message for American kids:** "Ethiopia is a very good country, with a lot of culture — I've heard that America is a beautiful country as well." —COMMON LANGUAGE PROJECT



ALEX STONEHILL

## Learn a little Amharic!

**Hello:** Seulam

**Thank you:** Amesegenalo

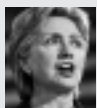
**Dog:** Wusha

**Cat:** Dimat

**I love you:** Wadialo (to a boy) or Wadishalo (to a girl)

## WHERE THEY STAND ON THE IRAQ WAR

What would the presidential candidates still in the running do about the Iraq War if they were elected? (Only the highlighted candidates are believed to have a chance of winning.)



**Hillary Clinton, Democrat:** Senator from New York; wants to withdraw some, but not all, troops by 2013; voted for the Iraq War in 2002 and has voted to fund the war ever since.



**Barack Obama, Democrat:** Senator from Illinois; wants to withdraw some, but not all troops by 2013; was against the Iraq War at the beginning, but has voted to fund the war ever since.



**Mike Gravel, Democrat:** Former Senator from Alaska; wants all troops home within 120 days; known for releasing the Pentagon Papers in 1971, which showed how the government lied to start the Vietnam War.



**John McCain, Republican:** Senator from Arizona; wants to send more troops to Iraq; voted for the Iraq War in 2002 and has voted to fund the war ever since.



**Ron Paul, Republican:** Congressman from Texas; wants to immediately withdraw troops from Iraq; voted against the Iraq War in 2002 and against continuing to fund the war ever since.



**Ralph Nader, Independent:** Activist for people's health and safety; wants to immediately withdraw all troops from Iraq.



**Cynthia McKinney, Green:** Former Congresswoman from Georgia; wants to immediately withdraw all troops from Iraq; voted against the Iraq War in 2002 and against continuing to fund the war ever since.



**Gloria La Riva, Party for Socialism and Liberation:** Anti-war and union activist; wants to immediately withdraw all troops from Iraq; campaigned against the Iraq War and against the Gulf War in 1990-91.

—AMANDA VENDER

## ELECTION 2008



# The Price Tag on the White House

By IndyKids staff

**H**ow much does it cost to become president? For all the candidates running for president in 2008, the cost will be more than \$1 billion, according to an estimate by the Center for Responsive Politics.

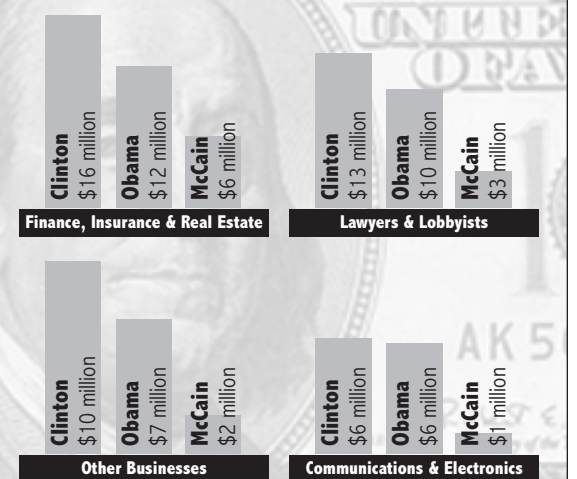
This is more money than ever spent before. The amount of money spent just in 2007 for the primary election period was \$481 million.

Candidates spend millions of dollars to promote their candidacy by buying national advertising, paying a large staff and operating phone and mail campaigns. Because it costs so much money to run for president, only candidates who can raise lots of money are taken seriously.

Large businesses give the candidates a lot of money. Then, once elected, the candidates generally pass laws that are good for the businesses that gave them money.

## CASH FOR THE CANDIDATES

How much certain industries are contributing:



NOTE: FIGURES ARE ROUNDED; SOURCE: OPENSECRETS.ORG (CENTER FOR RESPONSIVE POLITICS)

indykids

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Issue #14 • Printed March 7, 2008

### WHAT IS INDYKIDS?

IndyKids is a free newspaper and teaching tool that aims to inform children on current news and world events from a progressive perspective and to inspire in children a passion for social justice and learning. IndyKids is funded through donations and grants.

### SPECIAL THANKS TO

Children's PressLine: [www.cplmedia.org](http://www.cplmedia.org)  
Common Language Project: [www.commonlanguageproject.net](http://www.commonlanguageproject.net)  
New York Collective of Radical Educators: [www.nycore.org](http://www.nycore.org)  
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Teaching for Change: [www.teachingforchange.org](http://www.teachingforchange.org)

### HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Just contact IndyKids! Adults and kids can write articles, take photos, contribute artwork and help distribute the paper.

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### THANK YOU to the following donors for supporting IndyKids!

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• Ben and Jerry's Foundation  
• Broadway UCC  
• Robert Jackson, NYC Council  
• UCC, Neighbors in Need

#### RED STAR: \$100

• Elaine Blume  
• John Collier  
• Kiran Frey & Pradip Sethi  
• Gary Martin  
• Neal Stone & Steven Eng  
• Amanda Vender

#### BLUE STAR: \$50

• Dave Baker  
• Ruth Kelton  
• Marj & Larry Long  
• Helen Stavrou & Tom Grannell



# Election Fraud Leads To Violence In Kenya

By IndyKids staff

**T**wo rival groups in Kenya reached an important peace agreement in February after more than 1,500 people were killed in violence between the groups.

The violence began in December after the country's president, Mwai Kibaki, was re-elected. The party that lost, led by presidential candidate Raila Odinga, claims that the elections were stolen. Independent observers from the European Union agree that there was widespread election fraud — in one area, 15 percent more votes than people were counted.

Although the situation has been called "ethnic" violence between different tribal groups in Kenya, much of it stems from the economic inequality that exists between Kenyans.

Millions of Kenyans lack access to basic resources like health care, clean water, education and housing, while a small minority controls much of the country's land and resources, according



DOUGLAS RORI/KENYA INDYMEDIA

These children had to move from their home in Nairobi, Kenya, because of violence after elections.

to Yifat Susskind of MADRE, a global women's rights organization.

President Kibaki had promised to provide better resources for the country's poor during the 2002 election, but as president he failed to improve the lives of many Kenyans. After the dishonest February elections, tensions between the economically divided ethnic groups erupted, leading to widespread violence.

On February 28, President Kibaki created a powerful prime minister position and appointed Odinga. They also drew up an agreement that will allow half of the cabinet (president-appointed advisers) to be from Odinga's party. However, there are still many details to be sorted out, such as how the country will be governed with two people in charge.

## news briefs

### NATION

#### 935 Bush Lies About Iraq

President Bush and seven of his top officials made at least 935 false statements in the build-up to the war in Iraq, according to the Center for Public Integrity. In January the center published a study that investigated official statements in the two years after the September 11, 2001, attacks. The study concluded that Bush willfully gave incorrect information in order to gain public support for the war against Iraq. —AV



#### Women's Day

March 8 marked the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day, a day to honor women who struggle for the rights and liberation of women. In 1908, 15,000 women garment workers held a march in New York City to demand better wages and working conditions. This year, women in many countries organized events and marches to advocate for the rights of women. —AV



### WORLD

#### An Apology to Native People

The new Australian prime minister gave a speech in February saying that Australia was sorry for the bad treatment of the country's indigenous people, called Aborigines. From 1910 to 1970 as many as one of every three aboriginal children were taken from their families and sent to schools where they were taught Western culture. "To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry," said Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. —AV

#### New Cuban President

Fidel Castro resigned as the president of Cuba on February 19. Castro is a revolutionary leader who helped overthrow a dictatorship in Cuba in 1959 (the photo of Castro at left was taken during that time). During his nearly 50-year reign as president, Castro was the target of many assassination attempts by the U.S. government. Cuba calls itself a socialist republic, meaning that resources are shared among citizens, not owned by individuals for profit. Castro's brother, Raúl, was elected the new president by the National Assembly. —ET



#### Peace Sign's Birthday

The peace sign turned 50 years old on February 21. It was developed by a British man, Gerald Holtom. To design the sign, he combined the flag signals for the letters "N" and "D." The two letters stood for "nuclear disarmament," Holtom said. The peace sign was used in protests against nuclear weapons in Britain and spread around the world. —AV



# Congress Seeks Quick Fix for Sick Economy

By Erin Thompson

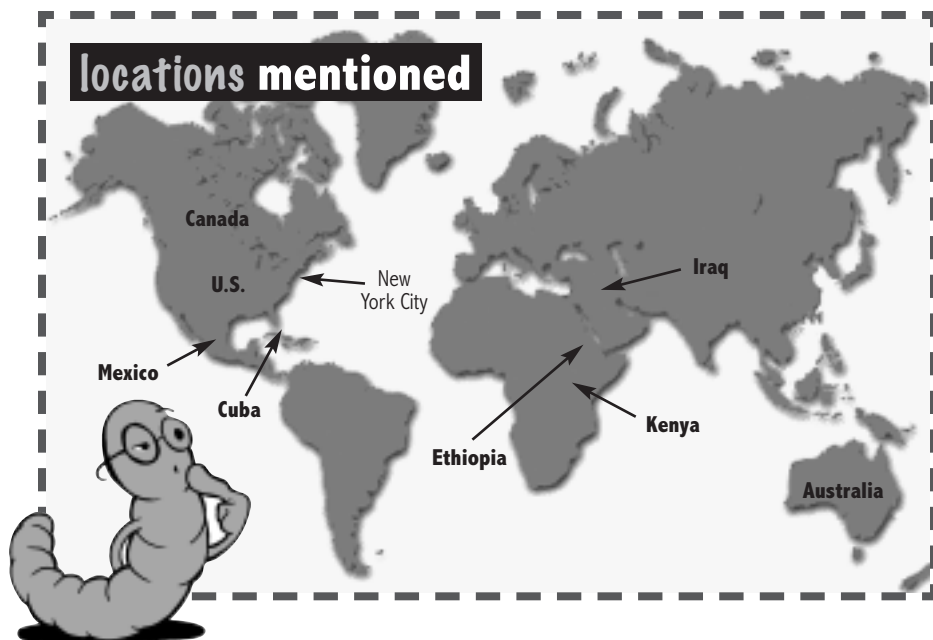
Economists are debating whether or not the United States is headed for an economic recession. During a recession there is more unemployment, and people have a hard time paying for things they need. Many economists have pointed to the collapse of the housing market, which has caused many Americans to lose their homes, the \$9.2 trillion

**WHAT IS A RECESSION?** A recession is when a country's economic productivity slows down for a long time. During a recession, people have less money and fewer people buy things. This means that many businesses are not able to make as much profit. To cut costs, many businesses lay off employees. When employees lose their jobs, they don't have enough money to buy things, further affecting the economy.

national debt and the cost of the war in Iraq as reasons the economy is suffering. In February, the Bush administration

approved an economic stimulus package aimed at jump-starting the economy. The government will give back \$600 to each taxpayer in the hopes that they will go out and spend the money on products. The tax break is tiny, however, compared to what many Americans must pay for health insurance, car and house payments and other living expenses.

Instead of spending government money on tax breaks that will give more money to businesses, some economists and state governors are saying that the government should put money into rebuilding national infrastructure — like roads, subways and bridges. New School University economist Max Fraad Wolff writes in *The Independent* that "Our roads, bridges, levees, dams and water treatment systems are slumbering weapons of mass destruction." Repairing them could provide more jobs and improve communities.







MEXICO INDYMEDIA

### Farmers Protest Free Trade

“Free Trade” sounds nice, but it means the loss of a job for millions of Mexican farmers. That’s why these farmers marched in Mexico City on January 31 to demand changes to Mexico’s trade rules with the United States and Canada.

Because of a new law that started on January 1, there will no longer be taxes in Mexico on corn, beans and milk imported (that come from) from the United States and Canada. This means that imported products will be cheaper than the Mexican farmers’ products. People will buy the cheaper imports and the Mexican farmers will go broke.



### People Go Where the Money Goes

The U.S. border with Mexico is one of the most heavily policed borders in the world. There is now a wall between the United States and Mexico along certain parts of the border.

Partly because of poverty resulting from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), many people from Mexico come to the United States to work.

More than 2,000 men, women and children have died trying to cross the Mexican border into the United States since 1998. Many of these deaths result from heat stroke and dehydration. U.S. border patrol agents have also killed people who pass into the United States.



ILLUSTRATION: UNITED FOR A FAIR ECONOMY

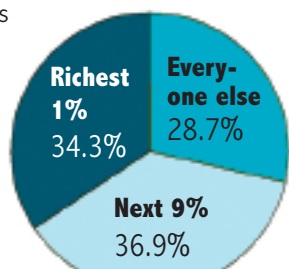
### Wealth and Poverty in the U.S.

While there is income inequality between countries, there is also income inequality among people *within* a country.

Most countries have a few people with lots of money and lots of people who have less money. The illustration above demonstrates wealth in the United States, where ten percent of the people have 70 percent of the wealth.

### Who Has the Money?

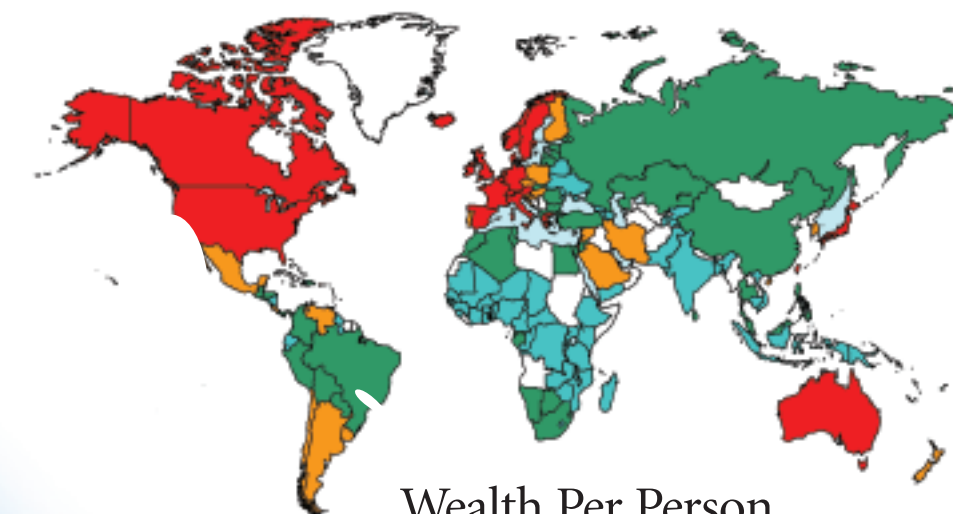
This pie chart shows how wealth is distributed in the United States. Just 1 percent of the population has more than a third of the money! (2004 figures)



SOURCE: ECONOMIC POLICY INSTITUTE

HOW RICH ARE YOU? A Lot Depends on Where You Were Born

# Where Is the Money?



### Wealth Per Person



SOURCE: UNU-WIDER; 2000 FIGURES

### Free Trade Not So Free

In 1994, an agreement called NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) was passed. It got rid of most taxes on goods traded between Canada, the United States and Mexico. The taxes used to make the price of imported goods higher so that people would prefer to buy local goods. NAFTA also got rid of some laws helping to keep the environment clean.

Since NAFTA, rich people in the United States, Canada and Mexico have gotten much richer, but the situation of poor people has either remained the same or gotten worse. Trade agreements like NAFTA have been signed with other countries, too, or are being negotiated.

### Effects of NAFTA: Farmers

- ❖ 1.5 million Mexican farmers lost their jobs because they couldn’t compete with cheaper products from the U.S.
- ❖ 226,695 U.S. small and family farms closed down from 1995 to 2003.

### What Did NAFTA Do to Ordinary People?

- ❖ The average wage for Mexican workers fell from \$5 a day to \$4 a day.
- ❖ Air pollution from manufacturing doubled in Mexico and increased in Canada.
- ❖ Over 500,000 U.S. workers lost their jobs.
- ❖ Overall food prices for people in the United States, Canada and Mexico have risen.

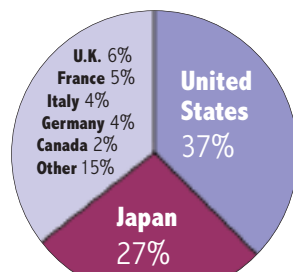
### And to the Rich?

- ❖ U.S. corporations’ profits rose 88 percent in the 1990s.
- ❖ The pay of the leaders of these big corporations rose by 463 percent!

What would it be like if you were born and lived someplace else in the world? Chances are, even if your family did the same kind of work they do in the United States, in most other places in the world they would make a lot less money. They might even be very poor. There is great inequality in wealth and resources in the world. This inequality is growing in large part because of economic agreements that help rich countries to get richer while poor countries

get poorer.

### Where Does The Richest 1 Percent Live?



SOURCE: UNU-WIDER

How much do you need to be among the world’s wealthiest? If you own

things with a total value of \$2,200, then you have more than half of the world’s adult population does. If you own things with a total value of \$61,000, you are among the richest 10 percent of adults in the world. —INDYKIDS STAFF

### A Student’s Story: Getting Here From Mexico

When our family members from Mexico need to come to the United States, they need money to get here. To come to this country you have to pay a lot of money that you worked hard for.

If you come to the United States without documentation, you give all your money to a person who will bring you. Now you are ready to go and all of your family is crying for you because it is a difficult trip and you could die.

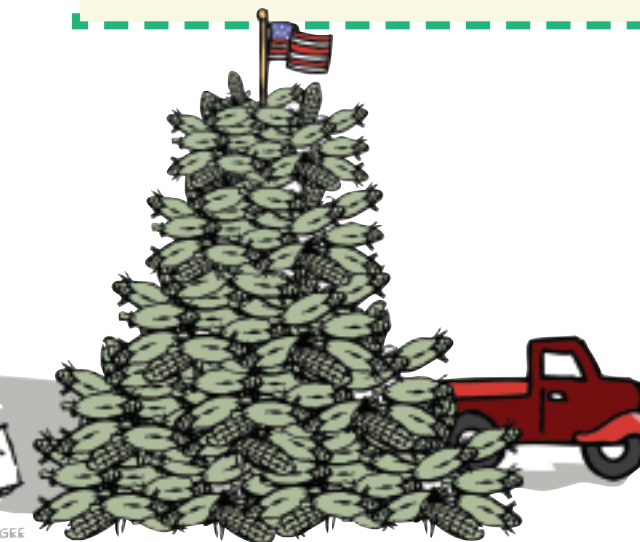
When you go to *la frontera* there is nowhere to drink water or to eat, so you have to bring your own water bottles and some food. You have to dress in all black so *la migra* can’t see you in the dark.



DELETTETHEBORDER.ORG

The only extra clothing you can bring is your underwear. If you get caught, *la migra* will put you back in your country. And if you want to try again, you have to pay again. It is very expensive.

— By Maria, a sixth grader in Brooklyn, NY. She was born in the U.S. and her parents are immigrants from Mexico.



### Mexican Farmers at Risk

Mexican farmers will have a hard time selling corn, beans, milk and other basic goods at a price cheaper than imports. This is because big U.S. farmers get a lot of money from the U.S. government to help them out. Mexican farmers don’t have this.



## science/health briefs

### Gray Wolf to Be Hunted Again

The Bush administration announced in February that gray wolves in the northern



WILDLIFE SCIENCE CENTER

Rocky Mountain states will no longer be protected animals. Gray wolves were some of the first animals to be protected under the 1973 Endangered Species Act. Animals protect-

ed under this law cannot be hunted by humans. With the wolves off the list, hunters are allowed to kill them. Wildlife conservationists have criticized the decision, saying that the wolf population, which now numbers around 1,300, is too small to be unprotected and might face extinction again. —ET

### Shooting Satellites

In February the U.S. military shot down a U.S. spy satellite that wasn't working properly. The military said that in shooting it down with a missile, a deadly fuel the satellite was carrying was destroyed. The event sparked concern that other countries will try to build up their space weapons to keep up with the United States and that there will be a race to make more weapons. —XT

## Fun Facts!

### Hip Hippos:

Don't be fooled by their big size and short legs — hippos are fast runners! They have been known to run at 30 miles per hour on land. When they dive down in the water, they can hold their breath for four to six minutes at a time. They can even sleep underwater. —SO



### Toxic Trailers

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has found dangerous levels of formaldehyde fumes in many of the trailers used to house victims of 2005 Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Formaldehyde is a preservative used in construction materials that causes breathing problems and cancer. As a result, the government hopes to move about 38,000 families out of the trailers and into other temporary housing by the summer. —XT



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# The Spiderwick Chronicles

By Yannery Gonzalez

**T**he film *The Spiderwick Chronicles* tells the tale of the Grace siblings — older sister Mallory and twins Jared and Simon — as they find themselves immersed in the middle of a battle between good and evil forces. Based on the book

### REVIEW

series of the same name by Tony DiTerlizzi and Holly Black, in *Spiderwick* there is another world of fairies and other magical creatures that ordinary humans are not aware of and cannot see.

Moving to a new town is difficult enough without worrying about battling evil hobgoblins and ogres, but that's exactly what the Grace siblings must face when Jared discovers their great-great uncle's "Field Guide to the Fantastical World Around You" and all the secrets it contains. The evil and fearsome ogre Mulgarath wants the field guide in hopes of discovering the secrets of all the other magical creatures in order to destroy them. That would make him more powerful and unstoppable unless Jared and crew, with the help of a few other magical creatures, can stop him.

With beautiful imagery and vibrant colors, this fantasy world comes alive to the viewer, and with each scene you feel as if you are taking the journey right alongside Jared, Simon and Mallory.



NICKELODEON PICTURES

## How to Prevent a Cold

By Priya Sachdeva

The cold and flu season is here, but there's a lot you can do to protect yourself from becoming a victim:

❖ According to Dr. Chandra Gupta, a pediatrician from Edison, New Jersey, one thing many of us don't do enough is wash our hands. Washing our hands frequently with warm water and soap can prevent germs from spreading throughout our bodies and to others. Keeping our fingernails free of dirt is another step we can take to protect ourselves.

❖ Maintaining a healthy diet full of fruits and vegetables is important, but remember to wash the fresh foods with warm water first to kill the germs!

❖ Frequently clean countertops, doorknobs, tables and other surfaces.

Taking these preventive measures will put you on the right track to staying healthy.



## Hoops Stars Help Out in New Orleans

By IndyKids staff

When the National Basketball Association (NBA) All-Star Game went to New Orleans in February, players took part in the "NBA Cares All-Star Day of Service."

All-Star players and 2,500 volunteers helped build homes and playgrounds and fix up schools. The experience helped players see the reality of life in the city that was in ruins after Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005.

According to the column *Edge of Sports*, Dallas Mavericks forward Dirk Nowitzki said, "I didn't think it was going to be this bad. This city needs a lot more help than us painting the walls. But hopefully this will be educational and us being out here will help get the message out. They need all the help they can get."



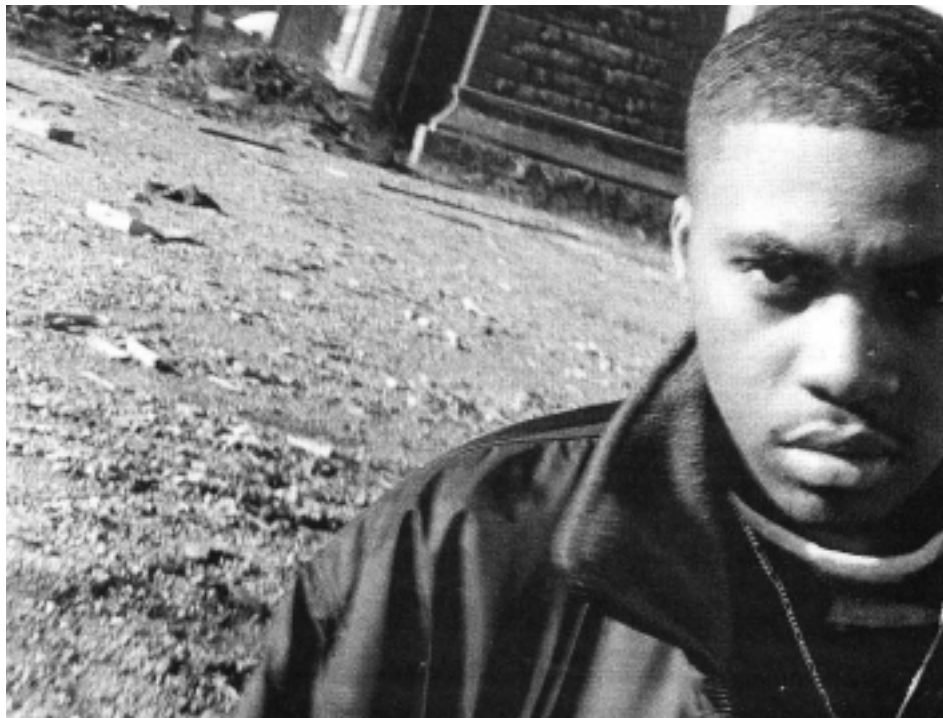
# Rapper Nas Sparks Debate

By Tara Mack

During Hollywood awards ceremonies, the stars get as much attention for what they wear as what they win. So flashbulbs were popping when rap artist Nas hit the red carpet at the Grammys in February sporting a t-shirt with the n-word printed on it in bold, silver calligraphy. Nas was promoting his upcoming album of the same name.

His choice of outfit sparked renewed discussion about what the n-word means in today's society and how, where and when it can be used.

"It's almost like he's being hypocritical," a fifth grader from Inglewood, California, was quoted as saying in the *City on a Hill Press*. "I know that he has made songs that are really positive, talking about how black people were kings and queens, and now he's wearing this



t-shirt."

The fifth grader's teacher, Salina Gray, said other students were concerned that "people all over the world might now think it's OK to call him this."

In an interview with *MTV News*, Nas responded to the criticism, saying that he's trying to take some of the sting out of that word. "No disrespect to none

of them who were part of the civil-rights movement, but some of my n---ahs in the streets don't know who [civil-rights activist] Medgar Evers was," he said. "I love Medgar Evers, but some of the n---ahs in the streets don't know Medgar Evers, they know who Nas is.... Right now, we're on a whole new movement. We're taking power [away] from that word."

## letters to the editor

Fifth graders from PS 34 in Manhattan wrote in to *IndyKids* in response to the story about the Blackwater company in Iraq (Issue #12) and shared their opinions on the war:

I think it makes no sense that people want to kill for oil. They didn't do anything to us. They should just bring back the soldiers because they have families and feelings like we do.  
—ZAKEIRA DUNBAR

\$200 billion just for a war? Imagine if we were Iraqis. Wouldn't you be scared 'cause you might die and there is a war in your country? We are killing people for no reason. Just so we can get oil. I'm ashamed.  
—PABLO MENDEZ

My opinion is that I agree with these kids about the war because the government has spent more than \$800 billion buying weapons for the U.S. army, and the government is giving less money than we need for education and schools. —JAIME NEGRON

It's messed up that people are killing. I think that Blackwater should leave because they are messing everything up. —BRANDON SALDANA



**WILTON SAYS ... IT'S YOUR TURN**

E-mail *IndyKids* at [indykids@indymedia.org](mailto:indykids@indymedia.org) or write to P.O. Box 1417, New York NY 10276.



JOSEPH HUFF-HANNON

**Students protest the decision by the New York City mayor to cut \$180 million from city schools.**

## Students Rally in Two Cities To Call for More School Funding

By *IndyKids* staff

As government officials slash education budgets across the country, some students have taken matters into their own hands.

In Baltimore, Maryland, 25 people, most of them high school students, were detained by the Baltimore police on February 6 when they protested the Maryland governor's not giving enough funding to schools, according to the *Baltimore Sun*.

The protesters put crime-scene tape on the State House steps and lay on the steps in a "die-in." Students said that the governor's underfunding of the schools is a crime.

In New York City, the announcement by Mayor Michael Bloomberg of cuts

of \$180 million from the city's public schools budget mid-year was met with loud protest from students. Several hundred students gathered in front of the

**“ We have to end the war, not the schools. ”**

Daina Spencer, student

Department of Education's headquarters on Valentine's Day to protest the cuts.

"We have to end the war, not the schools," Daina Spencer, a senior at John Jay Secondary School for Research in Brooklyn, told *The Independent*. Spencer and other students helped organize the protest using e-mail, cell phones and the online site Facebook.

## student voice

# Students Seek Clean Drinking Water

By Abigail Ortiz

For the past several years grocery stores in the Washington Heights neighborhood of Manhattan have been packed every morning with students buying bottled water. "Sometimes I buy water bottles from school. Other times I get my own and constantly refill it," said Johanna Rogiers, a junior at the High School for Law and Public Service.

The school has eight water fountains, seven of which are hot and taste dreadful. The hot, unhygienic taste of the school's water may be due to lead that may remain in the old pipes of the fountains. In late 2006 the New York City school system found that 222 of the city's 990 elementary schools contained lead, but the levels were not high enough to create a major health risk.

It makes no sense that so many schools are affected by these contaminated water fountains when here in New York City we are blessed with excellent tap water. Is buying bottled water actually a smarter choice? No! According to *AllAboutWater.org*, bottled water is undoubtedly not a healthier or purer alternative to tap water.

Whether the school water fountains are tested or not, students should still be aware of where the water in the fountains comes from and what solutions we have in order to conserve that water. The best solution to the school water fountain issue is to buy a reusable water bottle and refill it every day. This way everyone in the school would not need to pay for bottled water and instead would contribute to water conservation, a need that affects every person on this earth.

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GARY MARTIN

**MAKE THIS KITCHEN GREEN!** Wilton the Worm is preparing for Earth Day — this April 22. This is a picture of Wilton's kitchen. Can you find seven bad habits that Wilton's family needs to work on to protect the environment? Then find five good habits that Wilton's family should keep doing. Answers appear at the bottom of this page.



LEAH ORTANIZ

## Who Am I?



- 1.** I am a famous Mexican-American labor leader and my birthday, March 31, is a holiday in eight states.
- 2.** I co-founded the National Farm Workers Association with Dolores Huerta. It later became the United Farm Workers of America.
- 3.** Throughout my life I fasted (refused to eat) several times to draw public attention to the bad conditions of farmworkers.
- 4.** During my 1972 twenty-five-day fast in Phoenix, Arizona, I came up with the motto "Sí, se puede!" ("Yes, we can!" in Spanish) for the United Farm Workers of America. —SS

Answer: Cesar Chavez

**Things Wilton's family doesn't do**

1. Turn off the refrigerator door is closed.
2. Make sure you're not using it.
3. Turn off the sink whenever you're not using it.
4. Turn off lighting when it's sunny (stove).
5. Use cloth towels instead of paper towels.
6. Use nontoxic cleaning solutions.
7. Use glass cups and cloth napkins rather than styrofoam and paper.

**Good habits they should keep**

1. Put empty containers in the recycling bin.
2. Grow indoor plants to clean the air.
3. Take a lunchbox instead of using plastic or paper bags.
4. Have mom or dad bring a transportable coffee thermos instead of buying coffee.
5. Handwash small loads of dishes instead of using a dishwasher.



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